



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
B300 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We respectfully request the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee designate \$22 million within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fiscal year (FY) 2010 budget for the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).

The NVDRS is a network of state-based surveillance systems that links data from public health, law enforcement, medical examiners and social service agencies to provide a more comprehensive picture of the circumstances surrounding violent death. The system tracks deaths caused by suicide, homicide, child abuse and domestic abuse, enabling states and communities to develop effective strategies to prevent violent death. The current budget for NVDRS only provides funding for 17 states to track data on violent deaths, the much needed increase in funding of \$19 million would expand this critical program to all 50 states, territories and the District of Columbia.

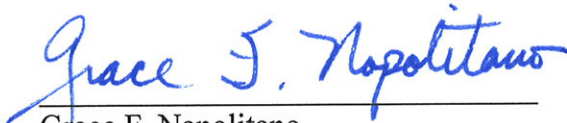
Each year more than 50,000 Americans suffer violent death. Despite this staggering loss of life, most communities lack data about the circumstances of these deaths. An issue of particular concern is the alarmingly high rate of suicides among active and former military personnel. NVDRS estimates that 20 percent of all suicides nationally are among military personnel. However, due to the lack of complete national data, this estimate is based on information from only 17 states. It is imperative that we provide additional funding to connect all 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia to the NVDRS so that we can better understand these trends.

Data collected through the NVDRS has led to effective programs that have been implemented from Oregon to Massachusetts, which have reduced the rates of suicide as well as lowered specific types of crime. However, due to funding shortfalls, there are currently nine states with approved applications that have been precluded from participation in the NVDRS. Appropriating \$22 million in fiscal year 2010 will enable the CDC to expand the NVDRS to collect uniform, detailed data which can be used to save lives in the future through prevention strategies, as well as enable states to better evaluate existing

programs, thereby assuring the most efficient and effective use of violence and suicide prevention dollars.

We believe that the NVDRS is a cost-effective and integral component to the long-term success of local efforts to better understand, and ultimately reduce, violent death in our communities. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful attention to this matter.

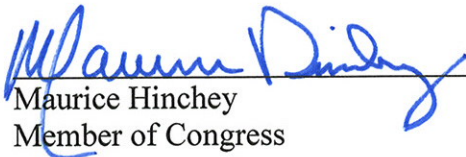
Sincerely,



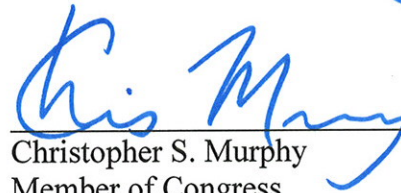
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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



Christopher S. Murphy
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Henry A. Waxman
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Joe Sestak
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William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress



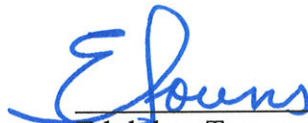
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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